

English Best Practice

For a lesson during my music practicum, I did a unit on tuning with a strings class. I started by drawing this on the board:

F	F	F	F
A	C	A	C
A	F	C	D
D	B \flat	F	G

Students would play these chords vertically and listen for tuning.

They then clapped a specific rhythm. After learning the rhythm, they played the above chords in that rhythm which is revealed to be the chords from “We Found Love” by Rihanna feat. Calvin Harris.

Breaking down the musical language into simple letters is one way to scaffold music literacy. This idea can be used in an ELL class. Students who felt uncomfortable sight-reading music had less difficulty when I eventually handed out the score because they had already read through the simple letters on the board.